



# INDUSTRY CIRCULAR

DEPARTMENT OF  
THE TREASURY

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms

Washington, D.C. 20226

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## CERTIFICATES OF ANALYSIS REQUIREMENTS FOR IMPORTED ITALIAN WINES

Importers of Wine and Other Concerned Parties:

**Purpose.** The Bureau is issuing this circular to advise industry members that existing requirements for the certification of DEG and methanol content in imported Italian wines are rescinded.

**Background.** In response to a potential health problem which was posed by the addition of methanol and diethylene glycol (DEG) in Italian wines, the Italian Government in 1986, instituted a mandatory testing program for its wines. In order to provide documentary evidence that wines exported to the United States contained safe levels of these contaminants, the Italian Government instructed all exporters to provide, as part of their export papers, certificates of analysis for methanol and DEG content. These certificates, issued by Italian Government approved testing facilities, currently accompany all shipments of Italian wines exported to the United States.

**EXISTING REQUIREMENTS.** Under existing U.S. Customs procedures, no Italian wines may be withdrawn from Customs custody until such time as the importer and/or broker has provided U.S. Customs with a valid copy of an Italian laboratory certificate of analysis. This certificate must attest to an acceptable level of methanol content in each brand and type of Italian wine in the particular shipment.

In the case of DEG content, release from Customs Custody was not predicated on the importer providing a certificate of analysis attesting to the absence of DEG. However, importers were instructed by Regional ATF Offices to have available such certificates of analysis at their business premises for possible inspection by ATF field personnel.

**DISCUSSION.** In the aftermath of the contaminated wine scandal in Italy, the Italian authorities implemented a wide range of regulations and control measures designed to guard against future instances of contamination in Italian wines. These control measures, the first of which was implemented in June, 1986, provided the United States Government with assurances that every possible precaution was being taken to maintain the integrity and quality of Italian wines and control over their production.

On July 23, 1987, ATF was officially notified by the Italian Government of its decision to revoke regulations which required the certification of DEG and methanol levels in wines destined for export. The effective date of this action is July 30, 1987. Though such certificates will no longer be issued, the Italian authorities have assured us that they will continue to test for DEG and methanol in wines exported to the United States.

Action. In light of the Italian Government's decision to revoke its certification procedures, ATF notified the U.S. Customs Service that effective July 30, 1987, all instructions and directives concerning certificates of analysis for Italian wine importations are rescinded. As a result, Customs has been advised that wine shipments arriving in the U.S. on or after July 30, 1987 need not be accompanied by certificates of analysis for DEG and methanol content levels.

This industry circular supersedes the instructions contained in circulars: #86-9 and 86-10.

Inquiries. Inquiries concerning this circular should refer to its number and be addressed to the Associate Director (Compliance Operations), Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20226.

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Director

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